(54) Title: WAGERING GAME WITH CHANGED GAME INDICIA OVER MULTIPLE GAMING SESSIONS
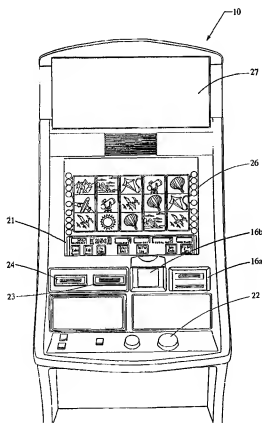
(57) Abstract: A method for conducting a wagering game includes receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game that is played during a gaming session occurring over a period of time. At least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes is selected in response to receiving the wager inputs. A gaming indicia is presented during the gaming session and, in response to a predetermined condition occurring during the period of time of the gaming session, the gaming indicia is altered in a subsequent gaming session of the wagering game played by the player.

WAGERING GAME WITH CHANGED GAME INDICIA OVER MULTIPLE GAMING SESSIONS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001]   The present invention relates generally to gaming terminals for playing a wagering game and, more particularly, to a gaming terminal displaying an altered state of a gaming indicia in response to an occurrence of a predetermined condition.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002]   Gaming machines, such as slot machines, video poker machines, and the like, have been a cornerstone of the gaming industry for several years. Generally, the popularity of such machines with players is dependent on the likelihood (or perceived likelihood) of winning money at the machine and the intrinsic entertainment value of the machine relative to other available gaming options.   Where the available gaming options include a number of competing machines and the expectation of winning each machine is roughly the same (or believed to be the same), players are most likely to be attracted to the most entertaining and exciting of the machines.

[0003]   Consequently, shrewd operators strive to employ the most entertaining and exciting machines available because such machines attract frequent play and, hence, increase profitability to the operator. In the competitive gaming machine industry, there is a continuing need for gaming machine manufacturers to produce new types of games, or enhancements to existing games, which will attract frequent play by enhancing the entertainment value and excitement associated with the game.

[0004]   One concept that has been successfully employed to enhance the entertainment value of a game is that of a "bonus" game which may be played in conjunction with a "basic" game. The bonus game may comprise any type of game, either similar to or completely different from the basic game, and is entered upon the occurrence of a selected event or outcome of the basic game. Such a bonus game produces a significantly higher level of player excitement than the basic game because it provides a greater expectation of winning than the basic game.

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[0005]   Another concept that has been employed is the use of a progressive jackpot. In the gaming industry, a "progressive" involves collecting coin-in data from participating gaming device(s) (*e.g.*, slot machines), contributing a percentage of that coin-in data to a jackpot amount, and awarding that jackpot amount to a player upon the occurrence of a certain jackpot-won event. The percentage of the coin-in is determined prior to any result being achieved and is independent of any result. A jackpot-won event typically occurs when a "progressive winning position" is achieved at a participating gaming device. If the gaming device is a slot machine, a progressive winning position may, for example, correspond to alignment of progressive jackpot reel symbols along a certain payline. The initial progressive jackpot is a predetermined minimum amount. That jackpot amount, however, progressively increases as players continue to play the gaming machine without winning the jackpot. Further, when several gaming machines are linked together such that several players at several gaming machines compete for the same jackpot, the jackpot progressively increases at a much faster rate, which leads to further player excitement.

[0006]   In current basic games, bonus games, and progressive games, the player is provided with little incentive to return the game at a later time. Once the player chooses to stop playing the game in that round, the player is immediately awarded any credits that are remaining and also loses assets that have been accumulated, but not yet awarded. For example, in some games, the bonus game consists of the player collecting assets and when a certain number or combination of assets is accumulated, the player wins an award. However, should the player choose to leave the game prior to winning the award, the player loses all of the assets accumulated. This can cause player frustration and does not provide the player with any incentive to return to the game.

[0007]   Such a system also encourages "vulturing," in which the "vulturing" player waits for a person who is close to winning an award to leave the gaming machine prior to the winning of the award. The "vulturing" player then begins to play the machine, and may quickly win the award without investing much time into the game. This is also frustrating for other players.

[0008]   Thus, there is a need to allow a player to accumulate assets on gaming terminals and to have those assets restored to them should the player return to the game at a later time.   This way, should a player choose to leave a game, anything the player has accumulated during the game goes with them and is restored at a later time when the player returns to the game. This alleviates the player frustration at losing assets that they have accumulated and also provides the player an incentive to return to the game at a later date.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009]   A method for conducting a wagering game includes receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game that is played during a gaming session occurring over a period of time. At least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes is selected in response to receiving the wager inputs. A gaming indicia is presented during the gaming session and, in response to a predetermined condition occurring during the period of time of the gaming session, the gaming indicia is altered in a subsequent gaming session of the wagering game played by the player.

[0010]   In another aspect of the present invention, a method for playing a wagering game comprises receiving wager inputs from a player of the wagering game. At least one-randomly selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes is selected in response to receiving the wager inputs. A first data set of a gaming indicia and a second data set of the gaming indicia is stored. The gaming indicia is presented based on the first data set during a first gaming session of the wagering game, wherein the first gaming session occurs over a period of time. In response to an occurrence of a predetermined condition that is associated with the period of time, the gaming indicia is presented based on the second data set during a second gaming session of the wagering game.

[0011]   In an alternative aspect of the present invention, a gaming terminal for playing a wagering game comprises a display for displaying at least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes in response to accepting wager inputs from a player during a gaming session of a wagering game. The gaming session occurs over a period of time. The gaming terminal further comprises a controller coupled to said display and programmed to present a gaming indicia

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during the gaming session of the wagering game. In response to a predetermined condition occurring during the period of time, the controller is further programmed to change the gaming indicia to altered gaming indicia in a subsequent gaming session of the wagering game played by the player.

[0012]   In an alternative aspect of the present invention, a method for conducting a wagering game comprises receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game. The wagering game is played by the player during a plurality of gaming sessions. At least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes is selected in response to the receiving step. Gaming indicia is presented during the plurality of gaming sessions and, in response to a predetermined condition occurring during at least one of the plurality of gaming sessions, the gaming indicia is changed to altered gaming indicia in a subsequent gaming session of the plurality of gaming sessions. The predetermined condition is dependent on a period of time occurring during at least one of the plurality of gaming sessions.

[0013]   In an alternative aspect of the present invention, a method for playing a wagering game includes receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game that is played by the player in a first gaming session. At least one randomly-selected outcome is selected from a plurality of outcomes in response to receiving the wager inputs. In response to a predetermined condition being met during the first gaming session, an updated player attribute is stored based on a predetermined condition associated with said period of time. In response to the player playing the wagering game during a second gaming session, the player is allowed to select whether to use the updated player attribute to provide different gaming indicia.

[0014]   The above summary of the present invention is not intended to represent each embodiment, or every aspect, of the present invention. Additional features and benefits of the present invention are apparent from the detailed description, figures, and claims set forth below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0015]   FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a video gaming terminal according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0016]   FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the gaming terminal of FIG. 1.

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[0017]   FIG. 3 is a flowchart of an exemplary method of conducting a wagering game using the gaming terminal of FIG. 1.

[0018]   FIG. 4a represents an exemplary screen having a weather-related theme that is displayed during a gaming session of a wagering game.

[0019]   FIG. 4b represents the exemplary screen of FIG. 5a during a subsequent gaming session of the wagering game.

[0020]   FIG. 5a represents an exemplary screen having a set of gaming instructions that is displayed during a gaming session of a wagering game.

[0021]   FIG. 5b represents the exemplary screen of FIG. 7b during a subsequent gaming session of the wagering game.

[0022]   FIG. 6a represents an exemplary screen having a set of two-dimensional symbols displayed during a gaming session of a wagering game.

[0023]   FIG. 6b represents the exemplary screen of FIG. 6a having a set of three-dimensional symbols displayed during a subsequent gaming session of the wagering game.

[0024]   While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments are shown by way of example in the drawings and are described in detail herein. It should be understood, however, that the invention is not intended to be limited to the particular forms disclosed. Rather, the invention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATED EMBODIMENTS

[0025]   FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of a typical gaming terminal 10 used by gaming establishments, such as casinos. With regard to the present invention, the gaming terminal 10 may be any type of gaming terminal and may have varying structures and methods of operation. For example, the gaming terminal 10 may be a mechanical gaming terminal configured to play mechanical slots, or it may be an electromechanical or electrical gaming terminal configured to play video slots or a video casino game, such as blackjack, slots, keno, poker, etc.

[0026]   As shown, the gaming terminal 10 includes input devices, such as a wager acceptor 16 (shown as a card wager acceptor 16a and a cash wager accepter

16b), a touch screen 21, a push-button panel 22, and an information reader 24. For outputs, the gaming terminal 10 includes a payout mechanism 23, a main display 26 for displaying information about the basic wagering game, and a secondary display 27 that may display an electronic version of a pay table, and/or also possibly game-related information or other entertainment features. While these typical components found in the gaming terminal 10 are described below, it should be understood that numerous other elements may exist and may be used in any number of combinations to create various forms of a gaming terminal.

[0027]   The wager acceptor 16 may be provided in many forms, individually or in combination. The cash wager acceptor 16a may include a coin slot acceptor or a note acceptor to input value to the gaming terminal 10. The card wager acceptor 16b may include a card-reading device for reading a card that has a recorded monetary value with which it is associated. The card wager acceptor 16b may also receive a card that authorizes access to a central account, which can transfer money to the gaming terminal 10.

[0028]   Also included is the payout mechanism 23, which performs the reverse functions of the wager acceptor. For example, the payout mechanism 23 may include a coin dispenser or a note dispenser to output value from gaming terminal 10. Also, the payout mechanism 23 may also be adapted to receive a card that authorizes the gaming terminal to transfer credits from the gaming terminal 10 to a central account.

[0029]   The push button panel 22 is typically offered, in addition to the touch screen 21, to provide players with an option on how to make their game selections. Alternatively, the push button panel 22 provides inputs for one aspect of operating the game, while the touch screen 21 allows for inputs needed for another aspect of operating the game.

[0030]   The outcome of the basic wagering game is displayed to the player on the main display 26. The main display 26 may take the form of a cathode ray tube (CRT), a high resolution LCD, a plasma display, LED, or any other type of video display suitable for use in the gaming terminal 10. As shown, the main display 26 includes the touch screen 21 overlaying the entire monitor (or a portion thereof) to

allow players to make game-related selections. Alternatively, the gaming terminal 10 may have a number of mechanical reels to display the game outcome, as well.

[0031]   In some embodiments, the information reader 24 is a card reader that allows for identification of a player by reading a card with information indicating his or her true identity. Currently, identification is used by casinos for rewarding certain players with complimentary services or special offers. For example, a player may be enrolled in the gaming establishment's players' club and may be awarded certain complimentary services as that player collects points in his or her player-tracking account. The player inserts his or her card into the player-identification card reader 24, which allows the casino's computers to register that player's wagering at the gaming terminal 10. The information reader 24 may also include a keypad (not shown) for entering a personal identification number (PIN). The gaming terminal 10 may require that the player enter their PIN prior to obtaining information. The gaming terminal 10 may use the secondary display 27 for providing the player with information about his or her account or other player-specific information. Also, in some embodiments, the information reader 24 may be used to restore assets that the player achieved during a previous game session and had saved.

[0032]   As shown in FIG. 2, the various components of the gaming terminal 10 are controlled by a central processing unit (CPU) 30 (such as a microprocessor or microcontroller). To provide the gaming functions, the CPU 30 executes a game program that allows for the randomly selected outcome. The CPU 30 is also coupled to or includes a local memory 32. The local memory 32 may comprise a volatile memory 33 (*e.g.*, a random-access memory (RAM)) and a non-volatile memory 34 (*e.g.*, an EEPROM). It should be appreciated that the CPU 30 may include one or more microprocessors. Similarly, the local memory 32 may include multiple RAM and multiple program memories.

[0033]   Communications between the peripheral components of the gaming terminal 10 and the CPU 30 occur through input/output (I/O) circuits 35a. As such, the CPU 30 also controls and receives inputs from the peripheral components of the gaming terminal 10. Further, the CPU 30 communicates with external systems via the I/O circuits 35b. Although the I/O circuits 35 may be shown

as a single block, it should be appreciated that the I/O circuits 35 may include a number of different types of I/O circuits.

[0034]   In some embodiments, the CPU 30 may not be inside the gaming terminal 10. Instead, the CPU 30 may be part of a game network 50 (FIG. 2) and may be used to control numerous gaming terminals 10. In these embodiments, the CPU 30 will run the basic games for each of the gaming terminals 10, and may also be used to link the gaming terminals 10 together. The game network 50 can include progressive jackpots that are contributed to by all or some of the gaming terminals 10 in the network (*e.g.*, terminal-level jackpots that only each terminal 10 contributes to, bank-level jackpots that are contributed to by all of the terminals 10 in a particular bank, and wide-area jackpots that are contributed to by a larger number of terminals 10, such as multiple banks). Alternatively, the game network 50 can allow the player to retrieve assets obtained while playing one terminal 10 at a different gaming terminal that is also part of the game network. Assets may be any number of things, including, but not limited to, monetary or non-monetary awards, features that a player builds up in a bonus or progressive game to win awards, etc.

[0035]   In some embodiments, the CPU 30 is also used with the information reader 24 to restore saved assets. For example, in one embodiment, the information reader 24 is adapted to receive and distribute tickets. The tickets each include a unique identifier. The unique identifier links the ticket to a file contained within the local memory 32 or a system memory 52 located in the game network 50. The file includes the assets that are being stored from a previous game. Monetary awards include game credits or money, while the non-monetary awards can be free plays (e.g., free spins), multipliers, or access to bonus and/or progressive games.

[0036]   When a player inserts a ticket into the information reader 24, the CPU 30 obtains the unique identifier and causes the appropriate memory 32, 52 to be searched, and the file containing the unique identifier matching the identifier on the ticket is retrieved. Any assets or other information contained in this file are then transmitted to the gaming terminal 10, and the player regains any assets that were saved during a previous game. This allows the player to keep assets even after a particular gaming session ends, which increases player commitment to a game and decreases vulturing.

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[0037]   In other embodiments, the information reader 24 may include a card reader, and the unique identifier provided at the gaming terminal 10 may be stored on a personal identification card, such as one described above. Or, the gaming terminal 10 includes a radio frequency identification device (RFID) transceiver or receiver so that an RFID transponder held by the player can be used to provide the unique identifier of the player at the gaming terminal 10 without the need to insert a card into the gaming terminal 10. RFID components can be those available from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (under the United States Department of Energy) of Richland, WA.

[0038]   In other embodiments, the information reader 24 may include a biometric reader, such as a finger, hand, or retina scanner, and the unique identifier may be the scanned biometric information. Additional information regarding biometric scanning, such as fingerprint scanning or hand geometry scanning, is available from International Biometric Group LLC of New York, NY. Other biometric identification techniques can be used as well for providing a unique identifier of the player. For example, a microphone can be used in a biometric identification device on the gaming terminal so that the player can be recognized using a voice recognition system.

[0039]   In summary, there are many techniques in which to provide a unique identifier for the player so that the assets accumulated by the player during one wagering session can be stored in either the system or local memory 52, 32, thereby allowing the player to subsequently access those assets at the same gaming terminal 10 or a different gaming terminal within the network 50. As described below with reference to FIGS. 3 to 7b, various assets related to the wagering game features and formats can be stored after one gaming session and used in a subsequent gaming session(s) to enhance the gaming experience for the player.

[0040]   Referring to FIG. 3, a method of conducting a wagering game will be described. At step 60, a player plays a wagering game session. During the game session, at step 64, the wagering game presents to the player one or more gaming indicia. The gaming indicia includes visual elements and audio elements. The visual elements can be any elements related to game play and game appearance. For example, the visual elements can be symbols depicted on a reel, instructions

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displayed during a wagering game, screen motifs, animations triggered by predetermined conditions, etc. The audio elements can be any sound related to game play and game content. For example, the audio elements can be instructions, music, sound effects, interactive dialogue, etc.

[0041]   At step 62, a time-dependent attribute of the player is modified when a predetermined condition occurs during the period of time spent in playing at least one gaming session of a wagering game. During the gaming session, the player obtains a number of attributes, or characteristics, that vary with time. For example, one attribute is the level of experience of the player, which generally increases with time. The more time the player invests in a game, the more experience the player will gain. Similarly, another attribute that varies over time is the status of the player. If the player has spent a predetermined amount of time playing a particular wagering game, the player can increase his or her status in relation to the game. For example, a "silver" status may be reached when the player has played ten hours of the wagering game, and a "gold" status may be reached when the player has played twenty hours of the wagering game. Yet other attributes can be frequency of a game-play feature, such as how often has the player selected a maximum-bet feature, and game-play frequency, such as how many gaming sessions has the player played over a fixed period of time.   Because these accumulated player attributes, or characteristics, accumulated during the first gaming session can lead to altered visual or audio elements that enhance the gaming experience of the player, they can be thought of as assets of the player that yield benefits to the player.

[0042]   The gaming session is terminated at step 66. In general, this means that the player has cashed-out his or her credits, wherein the credit meter has been reduced to zero. Although it is not necessary, the player generally walks away from the gaming terminal and comes back at a later time for a second or subsequent gaming session. The player may come back several hours later, a day later, a month later, or at any other time. Further, it is not necessary for the player to come back to the same gaming terminal where he or she has played the gaming session. The player can go to any gaming terminal that will recognize the accumulated attributes of the player. Further yet, it is not necessary to have a particular player, who has

accumulated the attributes, use the accumulated attributes at a later time. Thus, the accumulated attributes can be transferable to a different player.

[0043]   At step 68, the gaming indicia is altered based on the time-dependent attribute of the player. At least one visual or audio element is altered in response to the time that the player has played during the gaming session. The alteration can be any change to any visual or audio element, when a predetermined condition has been met. For example, a set of two-dimensional symbols can be altered to a set of three-dimensional symbols when a player has played at least five gaming sessions of a wagering game.

[0044]   During a subsequent gaming session, at step 70, the gaming indicia is presented in an altered state. When the player begins a subsequent gaming session, the attributes of the player that have been accumulated during the previous gaming session are restored and at least one aspect of the gaming indicia is changed based on the player's attributes. For example, when the player starts the subsequent gaming session the player can be greeted with a personalized message, such as "Welcome Back John Smith!" The restoring of the player's attributes can be done using any means, such as any of the means described above in reference to FIGs. 1 and 2 (e.g., using a memory card).

[0045]   Any of the gaming indicia can change independently or together, depending on predetermined conditions. The change of the gaming indicia awards the player visually and/or audibly by altering the state of a gaming terminal 10 after a certain period of time. Thus, for example, when a player inserts a player-tracking card in the gaming terminal 10, the game may change its look and/or sound to accommodate for the player's time on the gaming terminal 10. The change in the gaming indicia applies to bonus games as well. For example, after the player has played a wagering game for a predetermined period of time, the player may be entitled to a visually and/or audibly different bonus game that may or may not contain the same mathematical outcomes as when the bonus game was in its previous state.

[0046]   Referring now to FIGs. 4a and 4b, in one embodiment of the invention a bonus game includes changing the motif of the game from a night, clear-sky motif to a day, rainy motif. In a first gaming session, in FIG. 4a, the player is

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shown on a main display 126 the bonus game using night-time visual effects under a clear sky. The sky is full of stars and everything else is dark and engulfed with shadows. In a second gaming session, shown in FIG. 4b, the player is shown the bonus game with a rainy, day-time motif. As described above, the rainy motif is triggered by an event related to the time that the player has invested in the wagering game during one or more previous gaming sessions.

[0047]   Referring now to FIGs. 5a and 5b, in another embodiment of the invention a wagering game includes changing the level of gaming instructions and of information provided during the game. When the player is a novice, a more complex set of instructions and more information may be required to help the player understand the game. For example in a first gaming session, as shown in FIG. 5a, helpful information is provided on a main display 226. The player can be made aware, via pop-up windows 279, that the "Bonus Has Increased By 10 Credits," or that "Three Stoppers Have Been Found," or that the player can "Press [the] Help Button On The Next Screen To Get Additional Game Information." Optionally, the player can be instructed as to "How Many Lines To Select," "How Much To Bet Per Line," etc. Other gaming information can be provided, for example, in a bonus window 280 and a credit window 282. The bonus window 280 makes the player aware of how many credits have been awarded during a bonus game (*e.g.*, 35 credits), and the credit window 282 makes the player aware of how many credits have been awarded during a gaming session (*e.g.*, 892 credits).

[0048]   In a subsequent gaming session, shown in FIG. 5b, the player has become more familiar with the game and, consequently, less information is necessary. In fact, a player may get frustrated with a game that provides unnecessary gaming information. Thus, as the player gains experience and familiarity with a game less gaming information is required. As shown in FIG. 5b, the pop-up windows 279, the bonus window 280, and the credit window 282 have now been removed.

[0049]   Referring now to FIGs. 6a and 6b, in yet another embodiment of the invention a wagering game includes changing a set of symbols from two-dimensional symbols to three-dimensional symbols. In FIG. 6a, a set of symbols 390 is displayed on a main display 326 of a gaming terminal. In a gaming session of a

wagering game, the set of symbols 390 is represented using two-dimensional images. To provide a different gaming experience in a subsequent gaming session of the wagering game, the symbols 390 are represented using three-dimensional images, as shown in FIG. 6b. The change in appearance of the symbols 390 can be triggered by any predetermined condition as described above with respect to any embodiment of the current invention. For example, if a player reaches a predetermined value of maximum bet selections within a period of time during the gaming session, the player is awarded with a change in symbol appearance during the subsequent gaming session.

[0050]   While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments thereof have been shown by way of example in the drawings and herein described in detail. It should be understood, however, that it is not intended to limit the invention to the particular forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method for conducting a wagering game, comprising:

receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game, said wagering game being played by said player during a gaming session occurring over a period of time;

selecting at least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes in response to said receiving step;

presenting gaming indicia during said gaming session; and

in response to a predetermined condition occurring during said period of time, changing said gaming indicia to altered gaming indicia in a subsequent gaming session played by said player, said wagering game being played by said player during said subsequent gaming session.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein said changing includes storing information concerning said occurrence of said predetermined condition in a memory device and accessing said information during said subsequent gaming session.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein said presenting includes displaying said gaming indicia as a visual element of said wagering game.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein said presenting includes playing an audio element of said wagering game.

5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising selecting said predetermined condition from a group including at least one of accumulated time of said player, status of said player, experience of said player, and selection frequency of a game-play feature.

6.   The method of claim 5, wherein said game-play feature is a maximum-wager feature.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein said presenting includes selecting said gaming indicia from a group including a visual motif, an audio element, a set of gaming instructions, a video symbol, and an animation.

8.   The method of claim 1, wherein said altered gaming indicia includes one of a simple set of gaming instructions and a complex set of gaming instructions.

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9.   The method of claim 1, wherein said altered gaming indicia includes one of a two-dimensional symbol and a three-dimensional symbol.

10.   The method of claim 1, wherein said altered gaming indicia includes one of a simple animation and a complex animation.

11.   The method of claim 1, wherein

said presenting includes displaying a visual motif on a display of a gaming terminal; and

said changing includes altering said visual motif from a basic motif to a complex motif, wherein said predetermined condition occurs when a status level of said player reaches a next level.

12.   The method of claim 1, further comprising using a first gaming terminal during said gaming session and a second gaming terminal during said subsequent gaming session.

13.   The method of claim 1, further comprising storing on a player-tracking device at least one of a first data setting for said predetermined condition and a second data setting for said gaming indicia before terminating said gaming session.

14.   The method of claim 13, further comprising restoring at least one of said first data setting and said second data setting from said player-tracking device when starting said subsequent gaming session.

15.   The method of claim 1, further comprising modifying a game-play status associated with said player.

16.   A method for playing a wagering game, comprising:

receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game;

selecting at least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes in response to said receiving step;

storing a first data set of a gaming indicia and a second data set of said gaming indicia;

presenting said gaming indicia based on said first data set during a first gaming session of said wagering game, said first gaming session occurring over a period of time; and

in response to an occurrence of a predetermined condition that is associated with said period of time, presenting said gaming indicia based on said second data set during a second gaming session of said wagering game.

17.   The method of claim 16, further comprising displaying said gaming indicia as a visual element of said wagering game.

18.   The method of claim 16, further comprising playing said gaming indicia as an audio element of said wagering game.

19.   The method of claim 16, further comprising using a first gaming terminal during said first gaming session and a second gaming terminal during said second gaming session.

20.   The method of claim 16, wherein said storing step includes saving at least one of said first data set and said second data set in at least one of a memory device and a player-tracking device.

21.   The method of claim 20, further comprising retrieving at least one of said first data set and said second data set from at least one of said memory device and said player-tracking device.

22.   A gaming terminal for playing a wagering game, comprising:

a display for displaying at least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes in response to accepting wager inputs from a player during a gaming session of a wagering game, said gaming session occurring over a period of time; and

a controller coupled to said display and programmed to

present gaming indicia during said gaming session; and

in response to a predetermined condition occurring during said period time, change said gaming indicia to altered gaming indicia in a subsequent gaming session played by said player, said wagering game being played by said player during said subsequent gaming session.

23.   The gaming terminal of claim 22, wherein said gaming indicia is selected from at least one of a visual element and an audio element.

24.   The gaming terminal of claim 23, wherein said visual element is selected from a group including at least one of a set of gaming instructions, a video symbol, and an animation.

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25.   The gaming terminal of claim 22, further comprising a memory device for saving a data setting of said gaming indicia before terminating said gaming session.

26.   The gaming terminal of claim 22, further comprising a player-tracking device for storing a data setting of said gaming indicia before terminating said gaming session.

27.   The gaming terminal of claim 22, wherein said predetermined condition occurs when a next level is reached in at least one of an accumulated time of said player, a status of said player, an experience level of said player, and a selection frequency of a game-play feature.

28.   The method of claim 27, wherein said game-play feature is a maximum-wager feature.

29.   The method of claim 22, further comprising a memory device for saving and accessing information concerning said occurrence of said predetermined condition.

30.   A method for conducting a wagering game, comprising:

receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game, said wagering game being played by said player during a plurality of gaming sessions;

selecting at least one randomly-selected outcome of a plurality of outcomes in response to said receiving step;

presenting gaming indicia during said plurality of gaming sessions; and

in response to a predetermined condition occurring during at least one of said plurality of gaming sessions, changing said gaming indicia to altered gaming indicia in a subsequent gaming session of said plurality of gaming sessions, said predetermined condition being dependent on a period of time occurring during at least one of said plurality of gaming sessions.

31.   The method of claim 30, wherein said changing includes storing information concerning said occurrence of said predetermined condition in a memory device and accessing said information during said subsequent gaming session.

32.   The method of claim 30, further comprising selecting said predetermined condition from a group including at least one of accumulated time of

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said player, status of said player, experience of said player, and selection frequency of a game-play feature.

33.   The method of claim 30, further comprising using a first gaming terminal during one of said plurality of gaming sessions and a second gaming terminal during another one of said plurality of gaming sessions.

34.   A method for playing a wagering game, comprising:

receiving wager inputs from a player for a wagering game that is played by said player in a first gaming session;

selecting at least one randomly-selected outcome from a plurality of outcomes in response to said receiving step;

in response to a predetermined condition being met during said first gaming session, storing an updated player attribute based on a predetermined condition associated with said period of time; and

in response to the player playing said wagering game during a second gaming session, allowing said player to select whether to use said updated player attribute to provide different gaming indicia.

35.   The method of claim 34, wherein said storing includes saving said updated player attribute in a memory device.

36.   The method of claim 35, further comprising identifying said player via said memory device.

37.   The method of claim 34, wherein said storing includes saving said updated player attribute in a ticket issued to said player during said first gaming session.
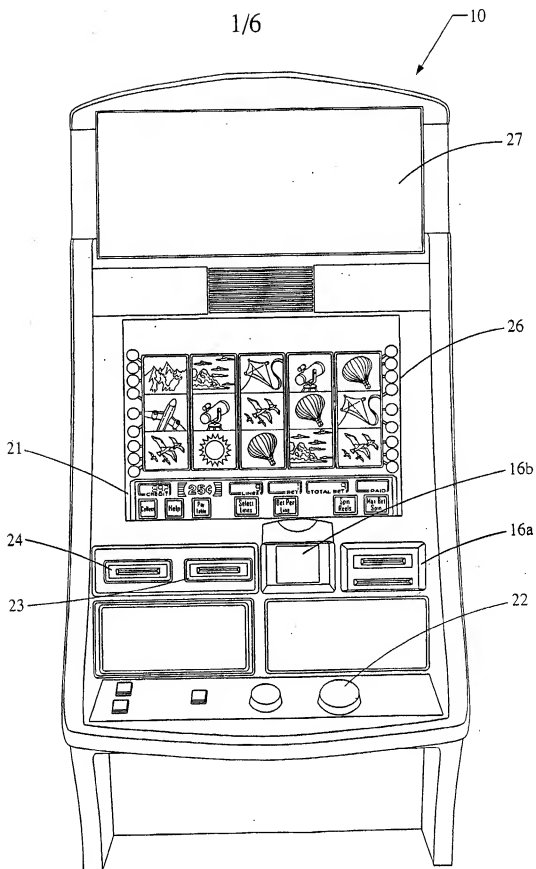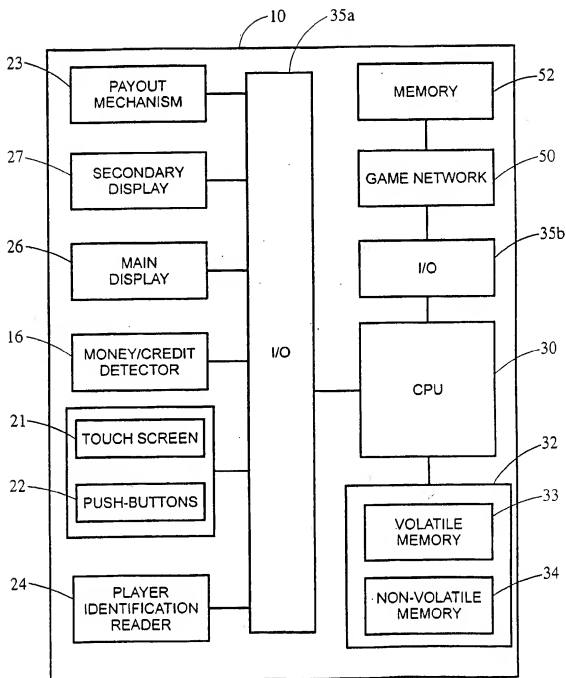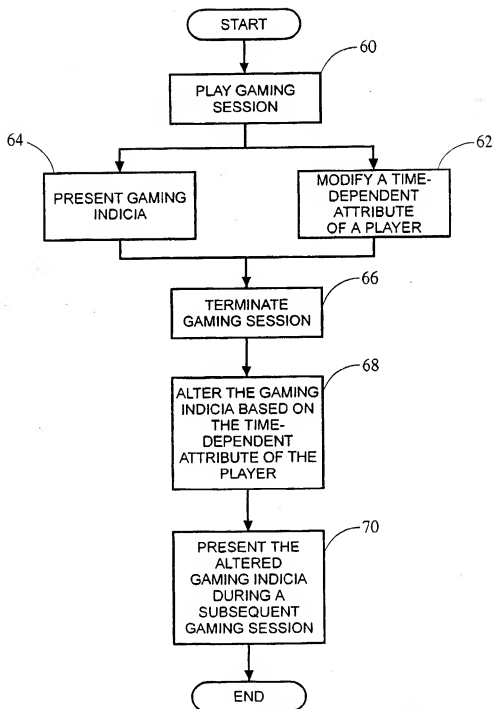
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Fig. 1

Fig. 2

```
        ┌─────────┐
        │  START  │
        └─────────┘
             │                        ─ 60
             ▼
      ┌────────────────┐
      │  PLAY GAMING   │
      │    SESSION     │
      └────────────────┘
         │           │
64 ─     ▼           ▼          ─ 62
┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│              │  │  MODIFY A TIME-  │
│ PRESENT      │  │    DEPENDENT     │
│ GAMING       │  │    ATTRIBUTE     │
│ INDICIA      │  │   OF A PLAYER    │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
         │           │
         ▼           ▼
      ┌────────────────┐           ─ 66
      │   TERMINATE    │
      │ GAMING SESSION │
      └────────────────┘
             │
             ▼                      ─ 68
      ┌────────────────┐
      │ ALTER THE GAMING│
      │ INDICIA BASED ON│
      │    THE TIME-    │
      │   DEPENDENT    │
      │  ATTRIBUTE OF THE│
      │     PLAYER     │
      └────────────────┘
             │
             ▼                      ─ 70
      ┌────────────────┐
      │  PRESENT THE   │
      │    ALTERED     │
      │ GAMING INDICIA │
      │   DURING A     │
      │  SUBSEQUENT    │
      │ GAMING SESSION │
      └────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
        ┌─────────┐
        │   END   │
        └─────────┘
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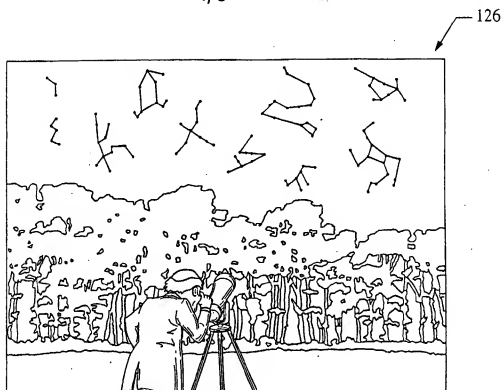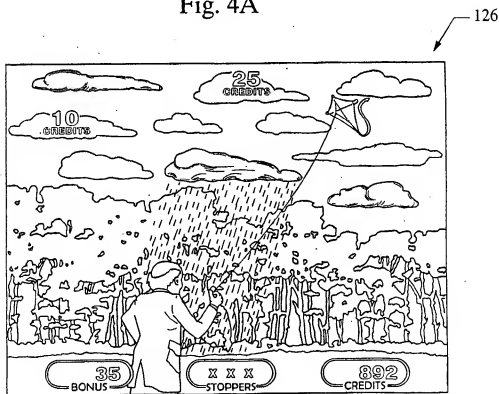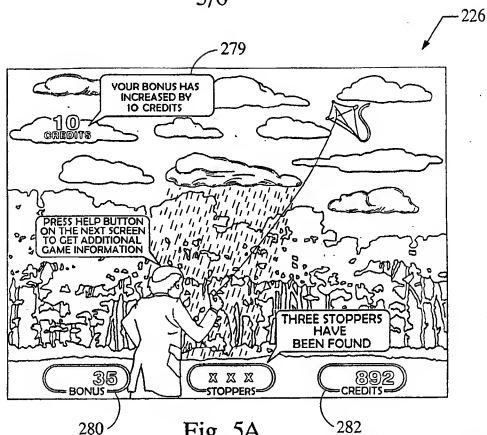
Fig. 3

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Fig. 4A
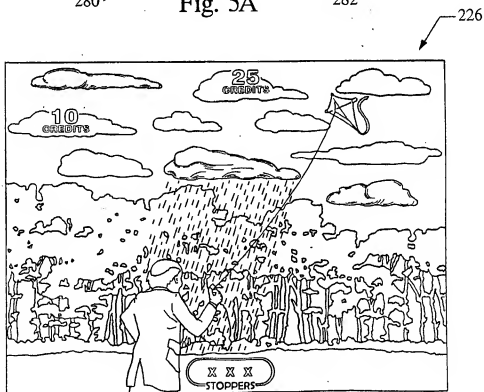
126

Fig. 4B

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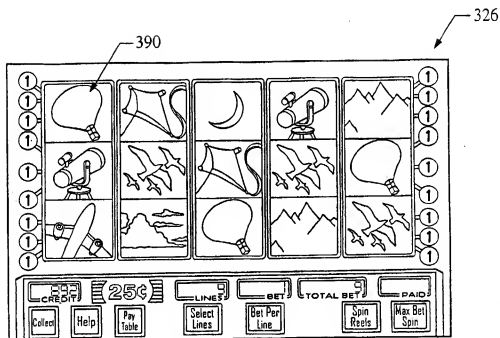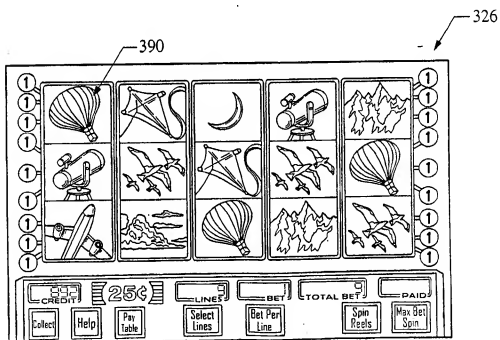Fig. 5A

Fig. 5B

Fig. 6A

Fig. 6B

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US05/23372

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7)   :   A63F 13/00
US CL   :   463/25

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 463/25, 16-20, 40, 43

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2001/0046893 A1 (Giobbi et al) 29 November 2001 (29.11.2001) page 2-6	1-3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 15-17, 20-22, 24-27, 29-36
Y		4, 8-10, 13, 14, 18, 23
Y	US 2003/0106769 A1 (Weiss) 12 June 2003 (12.06.2003), pages 12-13 par 348, 354	13, 14, 37
X	US 6,302,790 B1 (Brossard) 16 October 2001 (16.10.2001) column 4, line 32-36	6, 28

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.   ☐ See patent family annex.

*	Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
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"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
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Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
27 September 2005 (27.09.2005)	1 4 NOV 2005
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US	Authorized officer
Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450	For Xuan Thai Telephone No. 571-272-7147
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